



Special Section: Edward S. Herman and the Propaganda Model Today

The Propaganda Model and Intersectionality: Integrating Separate Paradigms

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Abstract

The world is currently witnessing a revitalisation of the right and of authoritarian political tendencies. Right-wing forces across the globe have been able to push misogynist, homophobic and xenophobic discourses into the mainstream of politics and media. Whilst these developments have been fuelled by the neoliberal economic programmes unrolled since the 1970s, sexism and racism have always been anchored within the structures of real existing capitalism. This suggests, then, that many of the societal issues we are encountering today are rooted in structural disadvantage and oppression pertaining not only to economics and class but also to gender, race and ethnicity. Yet, approaches in Communication Studies and Cultural Studies have often engaged in separate interrogations of media misrepresentations in relation to either class and economics, or gender and/or race. On the other hand, intersectional scholarship has long highlighted how these societal spheres are interconnected and should thus be researched simultaneously. The Herman-Chomsky Propaganda Model constitutes the leading analytical tool to theorize and investigate media bias. The following contributions will conceptualize and illustrate how the PM relates to intersectional scholarship and societal structures. This will be done on the basis of theoretical elaborations and empirical case studies as well as broader discussions of the politics within the disciplines of Communications Studies and Cultural Studies. It will be demonstrated that the PM can be used to unveil interlocking media biases and misrepresentations deriving from parallel societal discriminations including classism, sexism and racism.

Keywords

Propaganda Model, Intersectionality, Political Economy, Identity, Power, Discrimination, Social Control, Communication Studies, Cultural Studies

Florian Zollman

Introduction

Much literature based on the Propaganda Model (PM) and related approaches from the critical political-economy tradition have highlighted how economic inequalities in society relate to bias in media representations. This research has critically investigated news media representations of domestic affairs, conflict, war, and foreign policy issues, amongst other crucial topics. In these particular contexts, media gatekeepers have often been theorized by way of class-based institutional biases. Yet, sexism and racism in society equally facilitate systematic filtering processes and misrepresentations in the news media. Additionally, we are currently witnessing an era in which the political right as well as new forms of authoritarianism are on the rise, as exemplified by the election of Donald Trump as 45th President of the USA, or the election of the far-right Alternative for Germany (AFD) into the German parliament. At the beginning of the 21st century, right-wing forces across the globe have been able to push misogynist, homophobic and xenophobic discourses into the mainstream of politics and media. It is thus crucial for scholars and students of media and communication systems to analyse media representations in the context of multileveled structural forms of power, discrimination and oppression. The PM is well-suited for such an intersectional approach that accounts for class-gender-race biases. As a matter of fact, Edward S. Herman's work not only derived from an anti-fascist tradition, it has also been known for its anti-racist outlook (Pickard and Wolfson 2018; White 2018). As Khadijah Costley White (2018) argues: "Herman's critiques of anti-blackness and racism in media, while scarce, remain poignant." Similarly, Joan Pedro (2011b: 1907) suggested to combine the PM with approaches that look at stereotyped representations and drawing from postcolonial and feminist approaches.

To what extent, then, can Herman and Chomsky's PM be used to study media representations of race, gender and ethnicity? Structural models like the PM tend to be marginalised in Communication Studies and Cultural Studies. Does the same apply for approaches to the study of gender and race? Why is it important for Communication Studies and Cultural Studies today to focus upon structural inequalities? Is there a hierarchy in Communication Studies and Cultural Studies, in terms of what is popular to look at and what is not?

The following contributions further explore these questions and cover different aspects relating the PM to gender, race, class, and intersectionality scholarship, as well as broader topics and issues such as power in society and the marginalisation of approaches in Communication Studies and Cultural Studies.

Jeffery Klaehn

How Inequalities of Gender, Race and Ethnicity Can Be Incorporated Within the Existing Framework of the Propaganda Model

Based upon publications, the PM seems to be most popular in the United Kingdom (UK), and has over the past decade been gaining wider currency internationally. The PM is moving (or, more accurately, being moved?) from the porous margins of the

disciplines of Communication Studies, Cultural Studies and Sociology more quickly and steadily now than perhaps ever before, as evidenced by [The Propaganda Model Today](#) and the constant flow of substantial journal articles published over the past decade (see Pedro-Carañana, Broudy and Klaehn, 2018; Pedro, 2011a, 2011b; Zollmann, 2017). I predict we will see more research applying the PM to media content on race, ethnicity and gender, and to surrounding issues of inequality, particularly structural inequalities.

When looking at diversity of sources, do we have to look at these in terms of capitalism and the corporate media? And do issues involving gender, race and ethnicity sometimes exist apart from this framework? I would argue a definitive yes on the first question, if the sources in question are appearing in corporate-owned media, because capitalism and ownership structures set the context within which media content is created and produced. And I would suggest that the answer to the second question is no, for the same reasons. Inequalities of gender and race/ethnicity in relation to media ownership should be incorporated as central areas of focus within the ownership, advertising and sourcing filters, and the fifth filter, which is flexible enough to be context-specific, may also be relevant (for elaboration on the fifth filter, see Klaehn, 2009).

Can issues involving gender and race/ethnicity be explored concurrently, utilizing additional models? Yes, absolutely, but, at the same time, the PM is analytically well-suited to exploring topics and issues involving unequal power relations.

The PM's framework does not assume a focus on capitalism and class at the expense of race/gender bias, thus treating them as superficial symptoms of capitalism rather than as something more substantial. Ownership, size and profit orientation subsume both material and ideological power and directly link institutional power, advertising, profit and other dimensions that, taken together, represent the matrices of capitalism (Klaehn, 2002; 2010; Fuchs, 2018; Alford and Broudy, 2013; Broudy and Tanji, 2018; Mullen, 2010). As political techniques utilized in persuasive communication become increasingly more sophisticated, the PM continues to represent a conceptual framework oriented toward empirical analysis of media content, critical engagement and public relevance (Klaehn, 2003). Does it afford opportunities to explore ways in which media content mobilizes (or not) emotion while scapegoating minority groups? Can it enable and deepen understanding into ways media content connects with populism and strategies designed to mobilize fear, anger and desperation, with communication intended to further [‘divide and conquer’](#)? The PM is applicable to both the specifically local as well as to international topics and issues. As a conceptual model, it is centrally concerned to explore ways in which power meets meaning in discourses. Capitalism (and, arguably, global plutocratic power) typically frames race/gender bias; however, the PM, I would argue, is particularly well-suited for topics and issues involving social inequalities. What the PM will be applied to, and how, is entirely open to researchers utilizing the model.

There also exists, however, a rich and diverse range of literature within Communication Studies and Cultural Studies on legitimations, and this literature may be drawn upon alongside the PM in undertaking research, even though the PM is centrally concerned to explore legitimations. The PM can and in certain cases really should be used in unison with other conceptual models, to enrich the extent to

which research will fully capture specific dynamics in play across different time and place contexts. The PM is extremely well designed to be applied to a range of media. A bricolage approach would certainly be worthwhile, however, depending on contexts.

What about countries that are also capitalistic and that also have corporate media, but which simultaneously may have very different ideological assumptions? In France, for instance, marginal representation of non-white and especially Muslim voices is also linked to national ideologies of racial colour-blindness and universal French citizenship. Does a focus on capitalism and corporate power mitigate against understanding the full range of reasons for marginalization in such contexts, and can the PM be repurposed to address this? It shouldn't be. In this specific case, all the filters would, in theory, still apply. And the fifth "dominant ideology" filter could be adapted to specific ideological forces in play.

To what extent can and should issues involving class-gender-race biases be addressed with the PM's existing filters? Can journalists not sourcing Muslim women on issues relating to the veil, for instance, be analyzed in relation to the existing sources filter? Yes, of course. What about the #MeToo movement? Analysis of the quantity and quality of news coverage accorded sexual harassment and sexual assault pre- and post-#MeToo would almost certainly yield interesting results that would enable further understandings of media performance in relation to patriarchy.

Could #MeToo be explored in relation to the PM's first two filters? Would the flak filter also come into play, in terms of fear and reporting, 'blaming the victim,' threats? In terms of the fifth filter, patriarchy could certainly be positioned as a central ideological paradigm framing all. These questions could be explored in papers, essays and dissertations which would further demonstrate the resiliency and reach of the PM's explanatory framework and also almost certainly lead to more new scholarship that will expand the boundaries of the possible in terms of [*The Propaganda Model Today*](#) and in the years and decades to come as well.

Can gender, race and ethnicity be accounted for within the PM's existing filters, or do we need to develop new filters? A central aim of this discussion is to create opportunities for debate and to encourage further reflection on this question.

Florian Zollmann

Sexism and Racism as News Filters: An Intersectional Approach to the Propaganda Model

Intersectional scholarship has long highlighted how class, gender and race are interconnected (see Belkhir and Barnett, 2001). Intersectional research has shown that power is not only a function of wealth (i.e. social class) but also of gender and race. Media owners, managers and senior editors, in fact, are members of a male- and white-dominated economic elite. These intersecting class-gender-race biases, it could be argued, have parallel consequences for news access and outcomes.

To what extent, then, should sexism and racism be accounted for by the PM? In a forthcoming chapter in the edition [*Still Manufacturing Consent: the Propaganda Model in*](#)

[*the Information Age*](#) (forthcoming), edited by Alan MacLeod of the Glasgow University Media Group, I have proposed sexism and racism as new filters for the PM (see Zollmann, forthcoming). Whilst these filters are conceptualised, systematised and integrated in my forthcoming paper, it might be worth discussing why such a theoretisation of the PM is warranted. Sexist and racist media output is widespread and derives from institutional biases. Consequently, a PM approach can incorporate these structural and performance issues that go beyond economic and class-based filtering processes (see Herman, 1999: 14).

In terms of sexism, research by Karen Ross et al. (2016: 824) finds that a greater number of women as opposed to men graduate from journalism and media degrees and consequently enter the profession at about the same rate as men. Yet, women “do not go as far or as fast or take up the same beats as men and leave the industry earlier” (Ross et al., 2016: 824). Women’s career advancement opportunities lag far behind those of men and women, and are effectively marginalised in and excluded from the industry. This state of affairs is the consequence of “deeply gendered” socialisation processes in newsrooms (Ross et al., 2016: 825). Ross et al. further highlight how filtering processes impact on women in the news industry: “In the United Kingdom, women now make up the majority of journalism students, but senior roles remain largely occupied by men, the pay gap in the profession is stubbornly wide and there remains a gendered segregation in the types of news which women are employed to produce as well as the roles they are allocated within news organisations more broadly” (Ross et al., 2016: 825). This directly translates into news media reporting. “When we consider news content, research has documented the ways in which male defined news selection criteria favour topics which privilege male voices and reach out to sources whose status position also favours men,” write Ross et al. (2016: 826). Moreover, looking at a global, macro-level, the scholars find “a shared understanding of what constitutes news, whose voices are important and whose actions should be represented” and this “understanding seems universal and privileges men’s domination in a spectacularly consistent display of hegemonic reproduction which maintains the patriarchal status quo” (Ross et al., 2016: 839).

In terms of racism, there is a similar picture in regard to persons of colour, ethnic minorities or migrants, for whom it is even more difficult to become news workers in industrialised countries. These groups, in fact, face major institutional barriers with a view towards their ability to access the news media as media owners, managers or journalists (see Zollmann, forthcoming). News is overwhelmingly managed and produced by white elites operating in an indifferent institutional culture and lacking understanding of ethnic minority issues. For example, news tend to exclude expertise on ethnic minority groups, who are either underreported or disproportionately highlighted as a menace to society (see Van Dijk, 2012: 21). Teun A. van Dijk depicts a process of “othering” which:

... is specifically also true for those of ethnic minority groups, organizations, or persons. Their press releases tend to wind up in the wastepaper basket, and only the largest organizations in special circumstances may be explicitly sought after or their press releases used in news production. Ethnic minorities, their leaders, or spokespersons are not usually considered experts about ethnic events, even about those

events that involve themselves. Rather, they are typically considered biased sources, whereas (white) politicians, police officers, lawyers, scholars, or organizations tend to be seen as “independent” or “expert” and hence as reliable sources, also on ethnic events. “Our” white group and its members are never seen as being “ethnic” in the first place (van Dijk, 2012: 20).

A Harvard study by Alberto Alesina et al. (2018) found that in six Western countries (France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, the UK, and the USA) natives have stark misperceptions and stereotyped ideas about migrants. Accordingly, people have false impressions across the board, which are largely independent of social indicators such as income, age, gender, education, political affiliation or sector of work. “We find strikingly large biases in natives’ perceptions of the number and characteristics of immigrants: in all countries, respondents greatly overestimate the total number of immigrants, think immigrants are culturally and religiously more distant from them, and are economically weaker – less educated, more unemployed, poorer, and more reliant on government transfers – than is the case,” Alesina et al. (2018: 2) write. The scholars also reflect on the source of the problem: “a world of misinformation” and reinforcement of stereotyped perspectives in the media (Alesina et al., 2018: 30). Again, it is worth quoting the conclusion of the Harvard scholars at length:

Citizens and voters have distorted views about the number, the origin, and the characteristics of immigrants. (...) Anti-immigration parties have an incentive to maintain and even foster the extent of misinformation. Because information is endogenous, a vicious cycle of disinformation may arise. The more natives are misinformed, the more they become averse to immigrants (...), and the more they may look for confirmation of their views in the media. As a result, the media has an incentive to offer information supporting these views. For instance, immigrants who commit crimes or who free-ride on the welfare system may receive more media coverage than non-immigrants doing the same (Alesina et al., 2018: 30).

The exemplary presentation of sexism and racism in the news industry and resulting news media biases indicate deep-rooted filtering processes in accord with a PM. Further research with the PM could, thus, account for how sexism, racism as well as classism in society contribute towards news media misrepresentations. In fact, an intersectional approach to the PM would suggest that news media bias unfolds on an interlocking class-gender-race axis (see Zollmann, forthcoming). For instance, it has been shown “that women of color are multiply oppressed by race, class, and gender” (Belkhir and Barnett, 2001: 163). The same applies to LGBTQ and disabled people who similarly face manifold layers of oppression. This means that structures of domination and their news representations should be researched simultaneously as well as separately depending on the issue at hand (Belkhir and Barnett, 2001: 163). For example, we can expect racist and sexist “othering” not only in news media reporting of domestic affairs but also on Western imperialism and war. In the two latter instances, news media coverage not only hides the underlying economic (class) interests of the Western war machine but also frames people in target countries as irrational, vulnerable and backward (sexist and racist stereotyping) (see Zollmann, forthcoming).

In terms of domestic politics, news media reporting of austerity might not only be weighted against the working class but also void of perspectives highlighting how women and persons of color are more adversely affected by such policies than white men. In such and similar instances, a simultaneous approach to studying news media misrepresentations in consideration of the full spectrum of class-gender-race biases is advisable. On the other hand, there might be cases when separate analysis is reasonable in order to obtain analytical clarity and account for individual experiences of oppressions and their representations (see Belkhir and Barnett, 2001: 163-164). In any case, adding an intersectional approach to the PM appears to be of major importance. As Jean Ait Belkhir and Bernice McNair Barnett argue:

Race, gender and class represent the three most powerful organizing principles in the development of cultural ideology worldwide. Even though each culture constructs views of race, gender and class differently, there is always some social construction around these three particular differences/similarities, and thus far, that construction has almost always resulted in structured inequality (2001: 157).

Tina Sikka

The Importance of Integrating the Propaganda Model with Intersectionality in Communication and Cultural Studies

I think that the structural inequalities highlighted within the PM and other frameworks – I am thinking here of work by Robert W. McChesney, Dallas Walker Smythe, and Vincent Mosco (see Mosco, 2009) etc. – are critical to assessing how wealth facilitates social control. Without their analysis of the media as an economic institution, in which one is able to better understand how ownership, class-interests pressure, cultural hegemony, and ideologies work to buttress elite consensus, it would not be possible to conceptualize a coherent politics of identity and difference, since class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, dis/ability are all situated and articulated out of these very systems of power.

Communication and Cultural Studies have to be politically engaged in order to do this. I cannot think of an area of Communication and Cultural Studies that does not participate in some form of social activism as well as critique. Whether we are talking about media policy, transnational communication, cultural theory, media studies, popular culture and celebrity, media and gender, race and/or sexuality, or gaming studies, to name but a few, the study of communication and culture consistently centres fundamental questions around meaning-making, power, action, ideology, information, democratic participation and engagement in ways that go beyond abstraction and towards the study of concrete political practice. Going way back to James Carey (2008), in his book *Communication as Culture*, he talks about how social life is produced and reproduced through communication but makes it clear that communication itself is a form of action – specifically political action.

Intersectionality also plays an important role with respect to power and social control. Whenever I try to explain or discuss intersectionality in a classroom context, I always go back to the 1977 Combahee River Collective Statement and to their

central framework – which I believe underpins all intersectional thinking. In it, the Collective (2018) state the following: “We ... find it difficult to separate race from class from sex oppression because in our lives they are most often experienced simultaneously.” Power and control figure centrally in this definition.

However, then, as now, it is imperative to examine how hierarchical structures and relations of power also shape the self and identity. One area of research that does this quite well is contemporary social movement theory in which capitalism, neoliberalism, patriarchy, and the state are seen as macrostructural assemblages that are in a dialectical relationship with identity positions.

I also think there can be something of a hierarchy between Communication Studies and Cultural Studies, but I would think of it more as a set of fissures existing not hierarchically but nodally where, at times, some research programmes are given priority over others as a result of socio-cultural trends and political realities – which is something PhD. students appear to be acutely attuned to. For example, I have seen a rise in projects that centre on or, at least, include: discussions of marginalized identities (e.g. intersectionality as a buzzword comes up often), digital technologies/digital humanities; novel ways of thinking about communication and its relation to late capitalism; as well as innovative ways of examining how power and knowledge manifest themselves in different areas of socio-cultural life. I think political-economic analyses are making a resurgence, likely as a result of an increasing interest in socialism, as well as the changing nature of popular culture (in light of streaming services).

However, I do find methodologies retain a kind of hierarchical ranking in the minds of graduate students who are often reticent to use perfectly valid qualitative methodologies, like narrative analysis, auto-ethnography, and phenomenology, without feeling worried that the traditional markers of acceptable research (generalizability, verifiability etc.) are lacking.

It is unfortunate the PM tends to be marginalized in Communication and Cultural Studies, and I conclude as much below, but today I see the problem as moving in more productive directions that seek to examine how intersectionality can best be taken up in practice. What I mean here is the study of precisely how race, gender, class, dis/ability, and sexuality are mutuality constituted in and through socio-political and economic structures in ways that account for difference as well as identity.

There still, however, remains a lot of hostility to the idea that identity positions (what Nancy Fraser (2002) calls a ‘politics of recognition’) should constitute primary sites of theorization and research as opposed to class politics. Some scholars look askance at the study of identity and difference by arguing that it encourages a kind of marginalization Olympics. A quote by Kobena Mercer (1992: 33-34), which never fails to frustrate me, comes to mind: “There is nothing remotely groovy about difference and diversity as political problems....The management of diversity and difference through the bureaucratic mantra of race, class and gender encouraged the divisive rhetoric of being more marginal, more oppressed and therefore more righteous than thou.” This argument has resurfaced in different guises today.

It is important to map out how intersectional inequalities and structural disadvantages are inextricably linked. New permutations of intersectional analysis have gone to great lengths to reflect this. Remember that Kimberlé Crenshaw's conception of intersectionality, early on, was that identities are constituted within institutions and structures that can be advantaging for some and disadvantaging for others. In a recent piece she emphasizes this by arguing that contemporary "intersectional analysis foreground[s]....political and structural inequalities" (Cho, Crenshaw and McCall, 2013: 797).

Elizabeth Poole

How the Propaganda Model Furthers an Understanding of the Production Contexts and Content around Diversity Issues

In response to questions about the place of structural models in the fields of Communication and Cultural Studies, I would suggest that it depends how we are conceiving of these subjects. In the interdisciplinary approach to Media, Communications and Cultural Studies that is prevalent in the UK's university system, I would argue that the political-economy approach (of which the PM is a part) is central. This approach highlights the political and economic structural biases in (mostly) capitalist systems that result in gender, class and racial norms in the media. Rather than repeat what has already been said here, I want to focus on how the fifth filter, ideological bias, intersects with the others. It has been suggested that following the Cold war, Islamophobia is an equally significant ideological filter in the gatekeeping process. My own research on the production, representation and reception of news about Muslims in the UK illustrates this. Here, I will focus on a project that examined the production of news about diversity issues (mostly focussing on Muslims) in both mainstream and minority organisations in 2011/12 (Poole, 2014).

Interviews with 40 journalists from a range of media outlets (but only one conservative press media-worker in this self-selecting sample) demonstrated the dominance of white, male, middle-class employees in the mainstream media, while the minority media was similarly dominated by male, middle-class employees. This is clearly linked to wider structural biases where there are more entry barriers in general for women, and for minorities in mainstream organisations. This and the organisational context also had an impact on content. For example, those working in smaller local organisations felt they had more freedom from editorial control in the choice and story angle. The negative representation of Muslims across a range of media in Western contexts is well-documented (Poole, 2002; Richardson, 2003; Baker et al, 2013). This clearly stems from a specific economic environment where a largely commercial media system (filter 1) that needs to attract advertising (filter 2) excludes minority voices.

Politically, the 'war on terror' has cast Muslims as an extreme Other, a homogenised, suspicious community within; and, currently, a scapegoat for other ills through the discourse of immigration and austerity. If the majority of sources in the media derive from the political-economic establishment, this further marginalizes Muslim voices (filter 3). Obviously, these are generalisations and the situation is more complicated,

but I simplify here for the sake of the argument and due to limits of space. Digitization has diversified the media and the production context where the means of distribution are open to a wider demographic. Those working in minority media outlets felt they could write progressive stories, not positive stories propagating Islam, but with nuance and more depth and the opportunity to challenge “culturally defined frameworks of knowledge that take place in the encoding of media content” (Georgiou and Gumbert, 2006: 15). Although, as Rigoni and Saitta (2012) argue, it is important not to assume this resistant position in ethnic media, which equally often develops following a similar market logic. Commercial pressures there also resulted in a focus on conflictual news values. A disconnect also emerged between minority media workers who believed their creative endeavours could be a source for mainstream media, further diversifying the news, and mainstream producers who were either ignorant of these sources or continued to rely on existing primary sources (filter 3). The positive self-identification and feeling of belonging provided, in relation to the opportunity for voice, by minority media was blocked by the filters managing mainstream media, preventing their wider participation in the public sphere.

Within the organisational structures in which they worked (mainstream media), minority producers reported a tendency to be placed on ethnic stories and with this a ‘burden of responsibility’. Reflections on the role of their (ethnic) identities in their everyday professional practice were interesting. Minority producers suggested that their backgrounds could be an asset in accessing sources and writing stories with sensitivity to impact whilst journalists from a majority ethnic background argued that this should be irrelevant; journalists should focus on reporting factually and so be unconcerned about impact. This demonstrates the absorption of a professional ideology creating a normative culture which can have an impact on the production, content and consumption of articles about minority groups. Minority producers are often left in a double-bind where they are expected to cover ethnic stories (and the cultural obligations related to this) but their objectivity is often brought in to question.

The aim here is not to reduce participants’ responses to essentialized audience positions based on a static view of ethnicity or race, but to illustrate the conflicting loyalties felt by minority producers on a daily basis due to a specific context which is detailed by the PM. Despite a diversified media landscape, the political economy of the Internet means unequal relations are replicated online. Corporate interests dominate and alternative voices are marginalised. In a market-driven media environment it can be difficult for smaller enterprises to gain a significant audience share. These enterprises may remain economically marginalized and rely on ‘switched on’ audiences finding them. Equally, populist voices have successfully garnered new digital media forms to shift political discourse further to the right (Feshami, 2018; Siapera, 2019). In this context, the PM continues to offer a compelling theory for understanding these developments.

Daniel Broudy

The Propaganda Model and Intersectionality: Bridging Divisions in Culture and Opinion on Geostrategic Policies in Okinawa

One question is whether the PM can help citizens understand particular representations of gender, race, and/or ethnicity appearing in mass media. Representation is both a performative act and an effect of it. From my position, I sometimes wonder how these characteristics of a society's population, especially populations perceiving themselves to be homogenous, intersect with ways in which media content is (re)produced for mass consumption. While the PM was conceived as a structural critique of media, I would further the point that the structure is itself a reflection of the elites embedded within it. Extending the PM to this point raises questions, naturally, about the people who occupy such positions. If mass media and content are largely in the hands of people in power and molded by their perspectives and imperatives to maintain society's prevailing order – or structure – then the PM can reveal something about how public consent to policy is manufactured and dissent marginalized.

As a racial minority (westerner) living in an ethnic minority region of Japan (Okinawa), I have noticed over the past two decades how local concerns about Okinawa's geostrategic position – *vis à vis* Tokyo and Washington's mutual security treaty – are minimized or marginalized in mass media in light of the surrounding military base politics and economics. With the annexation of Okinawa by mainland Japan in 1879 and the subsequent post-WWII US military occupation until 1972, the people of Okinawa have been caught up in various contradictory and competing political forces. For example, local resistance to national defense policies crafted in Tokyo and Washington, which see the majority of US forces locally garrisoned, has created deep divisions among citizens both in Okinawa (just 0.6% of the Japanese landmass) and in America over the often reported necessity of maintaining this post-WWII defense structure. The situation here, in fact, invites study and critique from around the world wherever local citizens critically question and resist similar situations created by Washington and its clients, as Herman and Chomsky point out in *Manufacturing Consent* (2002 [1988]).

Over the years, I have heard countless students complain, sometimes quite passionately, about this unfair situation which engenders in them mixed feelings of what it means to be an Okinawan in Japan, the odd intersection of being Japanese by nationality but seeing their expressed views about ongoing social and economic inequities consistently ignored by powerful decision-makers in far-off places. University students question why – if they are truly Japanese citizens with full rights – their voices are continually ignored. Many excellent scholars both inside and outside Japan today describe local conditions as a kind of double colony where local calls for fundamental change in the status quo fail to dent the national politics of two huge powers in Tokyo and Washington.

To cite a handful in a cornucopia of many other researchers, I have found the work of Ushi Chinen (知念 ウシ) to provoke much thought. Identifying as an indigenous woman (*Uchinanchu*), she writes mostly in Japanese about [colonialism in Okinawa](#) (知念 ウシ, 2010) and the [symbolic violence](#) (知念 ウシ, 2013) enacted against the people by the largely unchanging post-WWII defense structures. Also, seeing herself as a transplanted minority from Japan, Miyume Tanji has written extensively about [resistance movements](#) (2006) in Okinawa and the [propaganda campaigns](#) (2017) needed to maintain this order over the decades. Hideki Yoshikawa has spoken about

the [militarized environment](#) and written about the effects of base expansion on Okinawa's unique [flora and fauna](#). Laura Hein, Mark Seldon, Peter Simpson, Makoto Arakaki, and I have also collected and edited a range of representative essays on the intersections of local memory, concepts of [nationality, ethnicity, and cultural conflict](#) (Hein and Seldon, 2003), and [resistance](#) (Broudy et al, 2013) in contemporary society. David Vine has assembled a massive tome on the intersections of economics, politics, environment, and gender in [Base Nation](#) (2015). Maki Sunagawa has written about [local resistance](#) (2015) and has even interviewed [John Pilger](#) (2016) and [Douglas Lummis](#) (2015) on these structures of violence and oppression that have appeared in East Asia since the end of WWII. So, much more work has been done and can be furthered by scholars interested in the PM and the apparent areas of overlap with intersectionality as regards ethnicity and culture.

While deeply rooted in past colonial-era policies, Okinawa's issues have also grown and been exposed to the neoliberal global order that subjects more and more individuals to the forces of the free market. Long reliant on central government investment, due to the disproportionate US base burden, Okinawa has been surging nonetheless in the tourism sector, but the great majority of revenues are shipped back to the mainland where huge industry concerns wield power over the region. The neoliberal plan today puts ethnic minority populations around the world in increasingly precarious positions, especially so in Okinawa as people are caught between the desire of wanting to develop the local economy on their own terms and wanting to preserve remnants of the indigenous culture and history and languages threatened with erasure by powerful business interests.

Island-wide resistance movements seeking real change, more autonomy in local politics and economic decision-making, are treated increasingly with derision and contempt. Intersectionality, again, could shed much light on how power is used to keep order in minority populations. Areas ripe for analysis can be found in comparative studies between national media and local media – the agenda setters and the smaller players.

Not long (just a few years) ago, a famous mainland novelist with political leanings to the far right created a national spectacle when he offered in a public speech in Osaka some words about Okinawan post-war history, quite divorced from reality. Described years previously by Donald Rumsfeld (2005) as the most dangerous in the world, a controversial US airfield in the heart of a major city in Okinawa was said to be an issue in 2015 only because the Okinawans decided to crowd its fences, for economic purposes, after the war (*Ryukyu Shimpo*, 2015a). Even though historical records show local communities had been bulldozed by American troops for the construction of an airfield fit for bombing missions of the mainland, Naoki Hyakuta made an apparent effort to erase this aspect of Okinawan history and culture.

When both local newspapers called on Hyakuta to correct his error, he doubled down, as it were, and called for their closure. His call on the government to curtail local media operations evidently emboldened politicians in the national congress to claim that the *Okinawa Times* and the *Ryukyu Shimpo* had been completely hijacked by left-wing (communist) forces and needed to be closed because of the “antisocial behavior” (沖縄タイムス, 2015) in the island-wide resistance movement against new US base construction. Another member of the congress, Hideo Ohnishi,

observed that, “the best way to punish the [Okinawan] media is to take away their advertising revenue. We [congressmen] should lobby the *Keidanren* (an organization of Japan’s major business leaders)” (*Ryukyu Shimpo*, 2015b). Such media and political performances across regional and national boundaries, across ethnic and economic divides, reveal much about these intersections of power and the propaganda they necessitate.

Mandy Tröger

On Blind Spots in Transatlantic Perspective

If, in 1977, Dallas Smythe (1977) lamented that communication was a “blind spot” for Marxists, in 2018, issues of race and gender are blind spots for political economists of communication more generally and for the PM specifically. Because of this, “its [the PM’s] reading of any cultural product is liable to be caustic” and lacking in subtlety (Alford, 2018: 151). I therefore appreciate the effort to introduce gender and race, and issues of intersectionality, to the model. To me, this stands for a broadening of the field of critical political economy as a whole. It is a welcome response to shifting playing fields – throughout history, race and gender have been significant “markers of difference” (Garnham, 1995) and cannot be ignored, (even) if the main point of entrance is class. The inclusion of both, gender and race, also bridges a still existing antagonism between Political Economy and Cultural Studies (e.g. Herman, 1996). Both theoretical approaches aim for a common goal: to understand social complexity, to lay open institutionalized structures of privilege and power, an emancipation from below (see Tina Sikka, above). For this, it is mandatory to look at intersecting issue of class, race and gender. Following Florian Zollman (FZ) and Jeffery Klaehn (JK), I agree, there is no intrinsic indisposition of the PM to integrate intersectionality. Such integration does, however, require a rethinking of the ways we conceptualize and apply the model.

In my proposition, I focus on English-language literature only. The PM, while established in the UK (see Elizabeth Poole and FZ above) and important though marginalized in the US, in Germany it is non-existent. This stands exemplary for the absence of the entire political-economic paradigm. A student might easily receive a degree in Communications Research and not have heard of Chomsky/Herman, the Frankfurt School or Critical Theory. This often surprises scholars outside of Germany. In recent history, however, there has been a strong political (anti-communist) impetus for it. A “double conservative turn,” first in the 1970s, and then again, in the 1980s, led either to occupational bans (e.g. Host Holzer) or to a severe hampering of individual careers (Meyen, 2017a). Critical scholars working in the Marxist tradition either left Germany (e.g. Hanno Hardt, Manfred Knoche) or were doomed to work at the margins or outside the field (e.g. Franz Dröge, Jörg Becker). What is left nowadays is a fairly conservative field strongly influenced by US mass communication research (Meyen, 2018). As Sebastian Seignani has put it, in German Communication Research “the Cold War has yet not ended,” making any critique of capitalism essentially impossible (Meyen, 2017b). This partly explains why the PM with its anti-communist filter (“us” vs. “them”) and its fundamental critique of capitalist-driven media production (see Kristin Comeforo, below) receives little to no acknowledgment. There is movement however, for instance, in the recent founding of the German [Network of Critical Communication Researchers](#). Its aim to

(re)introduce Political Economy and Cultural Studies approaches to the study of media and communications has caused a bit of a stir in the field (ibid.) Next year, it will host its third annual conference. Still, this shows how in Germany the struggle and blind spots currently lie elsewhere. I, therefore, cannot speak to the broadening of the PM in general, but only to its application in the English-language realm.

Looking at the names of respondents who have initially been asked to contribute to this segment, I cannot help but think that I have primarily been asked in my position as a woman, and secondarily, as a young scholar whose work is firmly based in the tradition of critical political economy. If this is true, I can see the rationale in it. Writing about gender and race is difficult to do, it is irritating and disruptive, especially for white men doing political economy. Those who are “tired” of hearing about “the politics of race and gender” (hooks, 1999) should remember that also facing these inequalities is tiring; it is not a choice but a (pre)condition that cannot be ignored.

It is generally on female scholars to address issues of gender bias (even though it includes an entire spectrum of sexism), and people of color to point to institutionalized racism (if only for the pleasant notion of diversity). This, however, is *not* because women and/or people of color do not have anything else to talk about. Rather, if they did not do it, no one else would. In academia, predominantly still white and male, it is only *because of* marginalized groups and their constant push to put these inequalities onto the agenda that we now think about introducing issues of intersectionality to the PM. I do not think, however, that it requires a particular type of genetic precondition to be aware of and write about race and gender (or their exclusion and/or exploitation) in the media and communication sector. The work of JK and FZ show that very clearly. Tackling these problems, however, *is* a discomforting process for it requires the questioning of long-held assumptions of how we do things. With reference to the PM, this means adjusting established patterns of how we look at media and news production by taking a more complex approach to social reality. In the end, this can only (and will) strengthen the PM.

There are differences in approach and opinion as to why this has yet not happened. I agree that the lack of gender/race issues has zero to do with the PM’s explanatory power; I hesitate, however, to blame it on the PM’s own marginalization. Also looking at the “ideology of corporate diversity” (Carañana, Broudy, and Klaehn, 2018: 13) itself (disregarding the intersections of class with gender and race) would not offer conclusive answers to the question of why the PM might be blind to these issues. While it is undoubtedly true that the corporate model does hold its share in upholding a status quo by leaving “little room for critiques of free-market capitalism” (ibid.) and by addressing women, people of color and other marginalized groups for market interests only (Gray, 2013), it would be dishonest to not be self-critical. As with any theory or model, the blind spots of the PM and the initiatives to fill them owe much to those who apply it.

While FZ and JK already present complex ideas on how to introduce gender and race to the PM, there are two options that are not mutually exclusive: first, as *layers* to existing filters or, second, as filters in their *own* right. For instance, advertising: while generally, this filter focuses on the dependence of media outlets on advertising revenue (with all its implications), the gender/race layer makes it possible to see the

(heterosexual) whiteness in this market rationale. Such readjustment would not require a reinventing of the wheel. Anamik Saha (2018), for instance, in combining critical media studies and media industries research with postcolonial studies and critical race perspectives already shows “how political economic forces and legacies of empire shape industrial cultural production and, in turn, media discourses around race” (synopsis). Likewise, issues of “new” target markets (e.g. communities of color, protesting women, LGBTQ communities) and new schemes to appropriate gender and race for market purposes have long been critiqued by critical race and feminist scholars (Gray, 2013; Roy, 2017). In relation to the PM, however, it could open unique ways to ask for and make visible (gaps in) Flak. Suggested in part also by JK, a larger PM analysis of Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo or LGBTQ movement, would allow for a political-economic frame of gender/race issues in news coverage. I doubt, however, that applying solely existing PM filters would suffice to come to a conclusive analysis. The inclusion of race and gender makes necessary a broader (capitalist) frame of institutionalized racism and sexism (Roy, 2017). Again, advertising: taking a central role in the production and distribution of media content according to target markets, looked at through a new gender/race filter, advertising-driven media points to gaps between consumers and citizens according to gender/race lines. Again, this is not new, just adjusted to fit a broader PM analysis. Connected issues of consumer citizenship (Gent, 2018) come to mind and would be easy to integrate.

With more females and people of color entering the field of communications and/or related professional fields, an inclusion of gender and race issues (as layers to existing filters and/or as new filters) allows them and other marginalized groups to find an inherent class dynamic to what they see and experience in daily life, the lens being critical political economy. In the end, including issues of intersectionality makes the PM more accessible and, in return, stronger, for it opens up blind spots to (our own) assumptions and privilege.

Alison Edgley

Intersectionality in the Media: a Test for the Logic of the Propaganda Model

Can the PM accommodate contemporary debates around exclusion, inclusion and intersectionality? Or is it a model that is dated, limited and incapable of navigating the often fraught debates currently taking place? It is fair to test the quality of the PM by exploring its capacity to handle new phenomena in general, as well as the complexity of issues in particular. The way to do that is to be clear about the structure and claims of the PM, and assess to what extent they can be applied, and whether greater understanding results.

A key premise of the PM is that, under conditions of democracy and (state) capitalism, debates within the media will be constrained, and take place only within very narrow confines. The effect is to ensure that there is little or no systematic questioning of the Western ideology under which we live. This ideology maintains a view of society in which those who work hard succeed, that power is diffuse and distributed among all citizens, and that abuses of power are down to ‘bad apples’ rather than the result of systemic flaws. Under these prevailing norms, an event may

only be deemed newsworthy if it does not challenge the status quo, in the sense that the framing of the event does not raise meaningful questions about or significantly threaten elite power and privilege. In consequence, there may well be debate, discussion and differences of opinion, but the central contention that state capitalism systematically privileges an elite, who on the whole are white-middle class males, is not on the agenda or open to serious question.

The PM identifies five filters through which the ‘raw material of news must pass’ before an event is deemed newsworthy by mainstream media outlets. These filters ensure that debate remains constrained, narrowed in specific ways. The first filter is ownership, whereby the considerable start-up capital required and other barriers to entry mean that mainstream media organisations are concentrated among elites. Privately-owned media companies, all of which are capitalist organisations, are set up to make profits while selling what they present as news. While owners may not directly influence day-to-day content, there is a lack of evidence that they tolerate let alone facilitate systemic analysis of power and privilege as part of their output.

The next three filters explain the underlying processes in relation to news gathering and distribution activities. The second filter notes that media companies have been reliant on advertising as a source of revenue. Put more generally, these companies focus on monetising the consumption of their output, as can be seen with new social media entrants, whether they admit they are news producers or not. Capitalist companies source capitalist media organisations. Their mutual interest in not undermining the system of wealth and privilege also has an impact on the tone and framing of media content, once more in predictably self-serving ways. The third filter is the need for credible and regular sources of news. This means media outlets turn to other elites in government and business, in order to provide the materials to generate and frame news. Superficially, they treat these sources as neutral and reliable and thus safe in their unwillingness to question the wider systemic privileging of power and wealth. The fourth filter is that business and government elites have the resources to mobilise ‘flak and enforcers’ in the form of litigious complaints should media companies stray into unwelcome arenas.

The final filter was framed within the original rendition of the PM as the ‘ideology of anti-communism’. This filter was conceived of during the Cold War, and draws upon identifiable tropes entailed in the explicit selection or framing of events. Most common is the arbitrary and simplistic division into good guys – ‘us’ – versus bad guys – ‘them.’ Today, and post-Cold War, the predominant filter has become the ‘anti-Muslim ideology’. The point here is that it could be any systematic ‘othering’ of a group deemed damaging to Western power and morality claims, such as ‘immigrants’ as a threat. Within these frames, events get cast as being about bad guys when individuals or groups explicitly or implicitly challenge the Western ideological claim to be the sole arbiter of moral virtue, because the West purports to offer freedom and democracy, as well as equality of opportunity to all. While social media, with its purported democratisation effect on news agendas, has had a number of interesting impacts on mainstream media organisations (not for discussion here), it has not been credibly argued that social media has undermined the central premise of the PM in terms of mainstream media framing.

It has frequently been asserted that the PM is Marxist in orientation (which, by implication, is a fatal flaw). It is not difficult to see that the focus in its original construction on ‘anti-communism’ rhetoric, as well as its focus on the structural effects of the political economy of state capitalism in shaping news, has arguably contributed to this interpretation. However, as I have previously argued, this labelling is to mis-understand and mis-interpret Chomsky’s broader social and political theory. Chomsky’s approach is libertarian socialist, not Marxist. This means that the root of his critique is not directed at the economic determinism of capitalism. Instead, the critique is about the political organisation and protection of elite economic and power privilege through the institution and legitimisation of the state. Chomsky’s extensive writing makes the persuasive case that capitalism’s contradictions and incoherence means it could not possibly have survived without a state which intervenes economically and politically to ensure that the interests of elites are defended and perpetuated. In the process, political and economic elites are instrumental in maintaining the system of elite privilege by obscuring and redirecting attention away from demonstrably illiberal and self-serving systems and structures of state capitalism.

With this broader libertarian-socialist framing, we can see that the filters of the PM are designed to keep Western elites safe from *any* perceived or actual threat to their power and privilege. As these elites tend also to be white middle-class males, we might expect this group to see any and all challenge from ‘others’ as a potential threat to their sense of entitlement to power and privilege. As ‘most people are not monsters,’ elites can and do believe their own meritocratic rhetoric and sense of entitlement, which is why Chomsky retains special ire for intellectuals who are well-positioned to expose the lies of government that perpetuate these intersectional inequities.

There is a clear link between Chomsky’s identification of the predominant ethnicity and gender of elites, and the empirical observation that it is not just the lower classes which are woefully under-represented in both media ownership and decision-making positions (which would be the basic Marxist criticism). The systematic exclusion of women, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities has become more evident. LGBTQ communities are drawing attention to their experience of exclusionary practices: intersectionality raises another set of marginalities, experiences of discrimination and rejection of ways of being. They are not reflected in the prevailing elite, and they represent not just a threat to their power, but also to their cultural supremacy. This state of affairs can only be explained in one of two ways. Either we continue to endorse the Western ideological rhetoric of freedom, democracy and equality of opportunity, which means we would have to conclude that individuals from these intersecting and disadvantaged groups are just less willing or less able to own or run a media organisation. Or we must assume that systems, structures and the instrumental decision-making of white, middle-class, male elites operate to systematically generate powerful forms of exclusion, both economic and cultural.

As the first filter shapes and intersects with the other four filters, we are left with a powerful explanatory model to explain the intersectional disadvantage of those who fail to systematically benefit from mainstream Western social and political organisation. Those who most stand to benefit from the economic and political privileges of a system that obscures systematic inequalities, who own and run

mainstream media outlets, and who make advertising decisions, are turned to and treated as neutral and reliable sources, as well as being able to afford to generate flak and enforcement when their privilege is threatened. Through the filters they ensure threats are neutralised, obscured or ridiculed. There will be 'honorary' people who are black, gay, disabled, female and intersectional who may inhabit a tiny minority of positions of power and privilege, but they only achieve this as long as they do not systematically question the systems and structures that underpin power and privilege in the West.

The fifth and final filter is suitably adaptive and could be re-named the 'ideology of anti-difference.' Those who are different and 'othered' who dare to question the morally superior claims of Western social systems and elites get systematically ignored or re-framed via the PM filters as dangerous, hysterical, irrational or unreliable. The analysis of the campaigns to address intersectionality are well-served by the PM. In turn, the PM clearly passes the test of being a viable and illuminating model.

Andrew Mullen

Intersectionality: A Contribution from Political Science

In 1986, the anarchist-libertarian socialist collective, the South End Press, published an important book entitled *Liberating Theory*, which was edited by Michael Albert (1986). The book set out to explore intersectionality and how class, gender, race and other aspects of our identity, plus our positions in the societal hierarchies that constitute modern capitalism, interact and how activists can navigate this complexity and avoid the limitations inherent in privileging just one aspect of our identity/position over the others. This book was the product of a collective intellectual effort that included Noam Chomsky, Holly Sklar and others, and it aimed to promote a new framework, labelled as complementary holism, for understanding and explaining contemporary societies, and to inform activist strategy. Although this work is quite dated, I believe it still provides a useful framework for understanding intersectionality. More specifically, it provides an approach which avoids treating class, gender, race, etc. as competing paradigms for understanding and explaining society and which instead attempts to integrate these into a comprehensive analytical framework. This work arguably has the potential to make an important contribution to the debate about how the PM can be used to conceptualize class, gender, race, etc. I tend to agree with Klaehn and Edgley that the existing framework of the PM, and its five filters, are flexible enough to incorporate these issues without the need for any additional and separate filters. My view is that capitalism incorporates and exploits racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination, as part of its general divide-and-rule strategy, but there is no reason why Black people, LGBTQ people, women, etc. cannot ascend the hierarchies within the capitalist system, including media corporations, if they possess the 'correct' outlook and values; e.g. Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama, Margaret Thatcher, etc. What matters is your politics, or more specifically your political ideology, not your identity. That does not mean that gender, race, etc. are irrelevant, as some traditional Marxists have argued in the past, but it does mean that we need a more sophisticated understanding of intersectionality and one that rejects simple binaries. Complementary holism offers us an escape route from this intellectual cul-de-sac.

There are two other classic works from political science that could contribute to the operationalization of the PM in ways that incorporate and illuminate racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination. The American political scientists, Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz (1970), challenged the simplistic accounts of liberals such as Robert Dahl and their accounts of decision-making and the distribution of power in liberal-democratic capitalist societies. Bachrach and Baratz implored those studying power to pay attention to what is going on within institutions; i.e. agenda-setting and the mobilization of bias which serves to elevate certain issues onto the institutional agenda for decision-making and which keeps other issues off the agenda. The focus of their work was the American city of Baltimore and why the local authority in that city was routinely ignoring the issues of poor Black citizens. Given that the existing filters of the Herman-Chomsky PM are concerned with institutional bias within media entities, incorporating this power dimension – the so-called ‘second face of power’ – can help the PM to account for racism, sexism, etc. Similarly the work of British political scientist, Steven Lukes (1974), on the ‘third face of power’ – the power of ideology and its role in reproducing dominant social structures via culturally-patterned behaviours – could also make an important contribution – particularly regarding the fifth ideological filter. Although Lukes focused on the structural power of class, there is no reason why this work cannot be utilized to account for racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination in terms of media performance.

Kristin Comeforo

Beyond the News - Finding an Intersectional PM through Celebrity Studies

In Broudy, Klaehn and Winter (2015), I explored how advertising, the second filter of the PM, provides “invisible gender cues” that create “trouble in the ladies room” for gender nonconforming women (Comeforo, 2015: 71-80). I argue that the neoliberal media, operating through the filters of the PM, produces “institutional reflexivity,” which extends biological sex differences into the rituals and displays of institutional cultures in ways that have nothing to do with sex (Goffman, 1977). My work with the PM – both in the classroom and in scholarship – has focused more on the structural aspects of the broader media product (i.e.: in entertainment and advertising) and the notion of “celebrity” more generally, rather than on the framing and production of news. As such, I have been de facto working with the PM in both an intersectional context, and as an intersectional model.

As Mandy Tröger reminds us, “the main point of entrance” into the PM is class, which positions the model as an exemplary tool for both highlighting and studying intersectionality in the real world. The PM can shine a light on the overlapping systems of oppression that inform very unequal power relations. Tina Sikka’s reference to the Combahee River Collective (CRC) provides excellent support for the PM to be applied to intersectional analysis. The CRC Statement (1977) outlined an intersectional black feminism that was distinct from mainstream feminisms employed by the National Organization for Women (NOW) and the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO) in that it, in the words of CRC founder Demita Frazier, established “black women’s right to look at their material conditions, analyze it, interrogate it, and come away with an analysis that’s about empowerment” (Taylor,

2017: 125). It also demanded an analysis grounded in the “truth” of what black women were living and experiencing. The filters of the PM are designed for, and proven effective in, shining light on the truths of power inequality that underpin media products and social relations.

The economic perspective, and the emphasis on collective lived reality of the PM is problematized by the media’s reliance on “celebrities” as the “credible sources” for a variety of ideological products – whether in the news, or entertainment. By looking at two celebrities – Beyoncé and Caitlyn Jenner – who have each been both praised and critiqued for their “advocacy” around their intersectional identities, we can see how to re-imagine a more explicitly intersectional PM.

The first two filters, ownership and advertising, can be re-positioned to consider who profits from women’s work generally, and/or black women’s and trans women’s work more specifically; and what constraints are placed on women’s choices in terms of work, and how they can express themselves. Celebrities like Beyoncé and Jenner have choices that non-affluent “regular” women do not. At the same time, they are bound to the terms of celebrity in order to maintain their affluence and (ostensible) freedom of choice.

That is, while Beyoncé has power to declare herself a feminist in “Flawless,” and to critique police brutality, Hurricane Katrina and black financial power in “Formation,” she delivers much of her critique implicitly, and remains largely within the bounds of the white corporate capital “owners” she serves. Similarly, Caitlyn Jenner’s gender performance/presentation is bound, as a celebrity, by her “owners” demands for hyper, normative femininity. She appears as a buxom, vibrant, sexy, blond bombshell on the cover of *Vanity Fair* – selling 432,000 single copies on newsstands, and generating 3.9 billion social media impressions for publisher Condé Nast. Despite this framing of trans women as flawlessly woman, most trans women not only struggle to be seen as women (Beemyn and Eliason, 2016), but are also disproportionately targeted for violence because of their gender. Trans women live with a 1 in 12 chance of being murdered – alarmingly higher than the 1 in 18,000 chance for cisgender folk (Selby, 2015).

Beyoncé and Jenner are good examples of those “honorary” people Alison Edgely (above) identifies as allowed to inhabit a “tiny minority of positions of power and privilege” because they obey their “owners” and “do not systematically question the systems and structures that underpin power and privilege in the West.” The PM explains how celebrities are manufactured as both credible, yet containable, sources of “dissent” by the system. Jenner performs a femininity that not only upholds traditional standards of feminine beauty and body, but which also makes billions of dollars in profits for the beauty industry. Beyoncé is so rich and disconnected from the lived reality of typical black women, that when she wrote an essay on the wage gap for The Shriver Report she cited that “the average working woman earns only 77 percent of what the average working man makes” (Knowles-Carter, 2014) – white women that is. Black women are typically paid 61 percent of what the average (white) working man makes (AAUW, 2018).

For Beyoncé, and Jenner, who has had more than her fair share of gaffes with the trans community because of her affluence and white (male) privilege, the wealth of

celebrity nullifies at least some of the stigma and oppression of their marginalized identities. Thus, the PM can be seen to move from the founding ideal of the CRC – that you can't really deal with sexism and racism without looking at capitalism. In this way, it has always already been (and will continue to be) an exemplary tool for intersectional analysis of media products.

Jeffery Klaehn and Florian Zollmann

Conclusion

The different contributions have highlighted the complementarity of the PM with intersectional approaches to analyzing society and the media. The PM operates on the central assumption, embedded in conflict theory, that discriminated and disadvantaged groups in society will also be marginalised in terms of their access to and representation in the media (see Klaehn and Mullen, 2010). The PM argues elites and their ideologies will dominate the public sphere at the expense of other actors and ideologies. This is facilitated by media institutions such as corporate ownership, advertising funding and market allocation as well as elite protection by the state and elite agents via flak campaigns and ideological closure.

As the contributors also highlighted, some of these filters apply to Communication Studies and Cultural Studies where the PM, with its substantial critique of capitalist- and elite-driven media production, has often been marginalised. An intersectional approach to the PM, however, adds further colours to the spectrum of societal bias and resulting media distortions in that it theorizes interlocking class-gender-race biases. Such a programme allows the dissection of the manifold layers of oppression as well as their connections, relationships and outcomes. Intersectionality should thus be incorporated with the PM and other critical approaches to researching and studying the media. Yet significantly, the discussants have left open the possibilities that the intersections of class, gender and race can be accounted for within the PM's existing filters as well as by way of developing new filters.

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